

Message Text

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PASS AGRICULTURE AND AID FOR GUATEMALA TASK FORCE

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SUBJECT: EC FOREIGN MINISTERS COUNCIL FEBRUARY 9: HIGHLIGHTS

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: AT THEIR COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN BRUSSELS ON FEBRUARY 9 THE EC FOREIGN MINISTERS AGREED TO THE RESUMPTION OF NEGOTIATIONS ON IMPROVING THE EXISTING TRADE AGREEMENT WITH SPAIN WHICH WERE BROKEN OFF LAST OCTOBER; DISCUSSED DIRECT ELECTIONS TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT; HELD INITIAL DISCUSSIONS ON THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE CREATION OF 200-MILE MARITIME ECONOMIC ZONES; ESTABLISHED A WORKING GROUP TO COORDINATE THE COMMUNITY'S EFFORTS TO ASSIST GUATEMALA; AND APPROVED THE IMMEDIATE TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF DUTIES ON SEED POTATOES AND NEW POTATOES. THE COUNCIL'S DISCUSSIONS

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ON GREECE AND ON EC COMMISSIONER LARDINOIS' PROPOSAL TO ELI-

MINATE THE COMMUNITY'S SKIMMED MILK STOCKS ARE REPORTED SEPTELS.

2. SPAIN: DURING THE RESTRICTED PORTION OF THE COUNCIL, THE MINISTERS DISCUSSED RELATIONS WITH SPAIN. MAKING ONLY A SLIGHT SEMANTIC CHANGE FROM THEIR DECISION OF JANUARY 20, THEY AGREED TO THE RESUMPTION OF "NEGOTIATIONS" (AS OPPOSED TO CONTACTS IN THE JANUARY FORMULATION) WITH SPAIN ON THE IMROVEMENT OF THE EXISTING TRADE AGREEMENT. COUNCIL AND PERM DEL SOURCES NOTE THAT IT WAS AGREED THAT THE COMMISSION WOULD MAKE NO OVERTURES TO THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT UNTIL AFTER THE VISIT OF FOREIGN MINISTER AREILZA TO BRUSSELS ON FEBRUARY 17. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE MINISTERS DID NOT DISCUSS RELATIONS WITH SPAIN AT ANY GREAT LENGTH AND DID NOT REACH ANY CONCLUSIONS AS TO HOW THE COMMUNITY SHOULD RESPOND IN THE EVENT THE SPANISH DO NOT WISH TO RESUME THE NEGOTIATIONS BROKEN OFF LAST FALL BUT INSTEAD PROPOSE TALKS LEADING TO A "CLOSER RELATIONSHIP" WITH THE COMMUNITY.

3. DIRECT ELECTION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: THE MINISTERS DISCUSSED THE VARIOUS PROPOSALS FOR THE APPORTIONMENT OF SEATS IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, BUT WERE UNABLE TO REACH ANY CONCLUSIONS. THE ITALIANS OFFERED A COMPROMISE BETWEEN THE DISTRIBUTION PROPOSED IN THE PATIJN REPORT AND THE MORE STRICTLY PROPORTIONAL FRENCH SUGGESTION. MOST OBSERVERS ARE BEGINNING TO DOUBT THAT THE APPORTIONMENT QUESTION WILL BE SOLVED BEFORE THE SPRING EUROPEAN COUNCIL, ALTHOUGH THE WORKING GROUP ON DIRECT ELECTIONS WAS INSTRUCTED TO CONTINUE ITS EFFORTS.

4. TWO-HUNDRED MILE MARITIME ECONOMIC ZONES: THE MINISTERS DISCUSSED THE INFORMAL PAPER PREPARED BY THE COMMISSION STAFF ON THE IMPLICATIONS TO THE EC OF THE POSSIBLE IMPOSITION EITHER BY THE COMMUNITY ITSELF, OR BY ITS NEIGHBORS, OF 200-MILE MARITIME ECONOMIC ZONES (SEE EC BRUSSELS 1126). NO DECISIONS WERE TAKEN ON THE BASIS OF THE PRESENT PAPER, ALTHOUGH THE MINISTERS URGED THE COMMISSION TO PRESENT ITS FORMAL PROPOSALS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. DURING THE DISCUSSION IRISH FOREIGN MINISTER FITZGERALD TERMED THE NEW 200-MILE ECONOMIC ZONES A SIGNIFICANT ECONOMIC RESOURCE OF THE MEMBER STATES CONCERNED, AND URGED THAT THEIR EXPLOITATION BE IN HARMONY WITH THE COMMUNITY'S REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AIMS. SEVERAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MINISTERS POINTED OUT THE NECESSITY TO RESOLVE, WITHIN A SHORT TIME, THE OUTSTANDING JURISDICTIONAL DISPUTES WHICH EXIST BETWEEN THE UK AND IRELAND REGARDING SEA AREAS UNDER THEIR CONTROL. THE MATTER IS EXPECTED TO COME BEFORE THE COUNCIL AGAIN AT ITS MARCH 1 AND 2 MEETING.

5. TROPICAL PRODUCTS: THE MINISTERS DISCUSSED BRIEFLY THE PREPARATION OF THE COMMUNITY PROPOSALS REGARDING TROPICAL

PRODUCTS IN THE MTN. BOTH COMMISSION REPRESENTATIVES AND COUNCIL PRESIDENT THORN URGED THE MINISTERS TO MAKE PROGRESS IN LISTING THE NUMEROUS RESERVATIONS STILL ATTACHED TO THE COMMISSION'S PROPOSALS SO THAT A DECISION COULD BE REACHED ON MARCH 1 AND 2. (SEE EC BRUSSELS 1294)

6. GUATEMALA: THE COUNCIL SET UP A SPECIAL WORKING GROUP, WHICH, IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE COMMISSION, IS TO REPORT TO COREPER WITHIN 48 HOURS ON POSSIBLE COMMUNITY AID TO GUATEMALA. THE WORKING GROUP IS TO FIRST INVENTORY THE AID BEING GIVEN BILATERALLY BY THE MEMBER STATES, AND THEN CONSIDER WHAT ASSISTANCE IS TO BE MADE AVAILABLE FROM COMMUNITY RESOURCES.

7. POTATOES: THE COUNCIL, WITHOUT DISCUSSION, APPROVED THE IMMEDIATE SUSPENSION OF DUTIES ON SEED POTATOES AND ON NEW POTATOES UNTIL MARCH 28. MORRIS

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